

Research Article

Knowledge of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse

Binsha Pappachan C^{1*}, Jipsa Philip², Jenita Pinto³, Nikeetta Aleyamma Kurian³, Victoria Rufina Rodrigues³

¹Assistant Professor, Father Muller College of Nursing, Mangalore, India

²Lecturer, Father Muller College of Nursing, Mangalore, India

³Ms. Jenita Pinto, Ms. Nikeetta AleyammaKurian, Ms. Victoria Rufina Rodrigues (UG students, Father Muller College of Nursing, Mangalore), India

Abstract

Aim: In this study assess the knowledge of mothers regarding the prevention of child abuse, find association between the knowledge of mothers and selected baseline data. The World Health Organization (WHO) distinguishes four types of child abuse i.e., physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, psychological abuse, and neglect. Method: In this study the population was the mothers of children with 1-14 years of age in Father Muller Medical College, Mangalore. In India, an estimated 679,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect as per the 2013 statistics. **Result:** Analysis of demographic variables shows that highest (35%) of the mothers are in the age group of 26-30 years and about 24% of them were in the age group of 31-35 years. Majorities (44%) of the mothers were with 2 children, 41% of the mothers with 1 child, and only 2% mothers with more than 3 children. Among the group majority (52%) of the mothers were having 1 male child and 55% were having one female child. The data also showed that 47% of them have at least one child below 14 years. **Conclusion:** The study findings revealed that most of the mothers (60%) had excellent knowledge regarding prevention of child abuse, about (34%) of them had good knowledge, about (6%) had average knowledge and none of the mothers had poor knowledge.

Keyword: Prevention of child abuse, Population, Mothers, Poor knowledge.

*Corresponding author: Mrs. Binsha Pappachan C, Assistant Professor, Father Muller College of Nursing, Mangalore, Email: bineshadennis83@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Children generally have fewer rights than adults and are classed as unable to make decision and legally must always be under the care and responsibility of a parent or adult or child custody if the parents' divorce or not. There are many social issues that affect children, such as childhood education, bullying, poverty, dysfunctional, child labor, and in developing countries, hunger [1].

Child abuse is the physical, sexual or emotional maltreatment of the child [2]. Child abuse is any activity that is done forcefully against the child's will. The World Health Organization (WHO) distinguishes four types of child abuse i.e., physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, psychological abuse, and neglect [3]. Child abuse is a serious and common problem in and around the nation [2]. Studies have suggested that up to one in four girls and one in eight boys will be sexually abused before they are eighteen years old.

Child abuse has negative outcome in children and adolescents that can extend into adulthood. Abused children often suffer physical injuries and stress that may disrupt early brain development. Children who are abused or neglected are at higher risk for health problems such as depression, alcoholism, drug abuse, smoking, sexual promiscuity, suicide and certain chronic diseases [1]. Child sexual abuse or child molestation is a form of child abuse in which an adult or older adolescent use a child for sexual stimulation [2]. Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviors where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child for sexual purpose. It includes any, touching for sexual purpose, fondling of breasts, buttocks, genitals, oral sex, sexual intercourse, an adult exposing themselves to the child, or seeking to have a child touch them for a sexual purpose [4]. Child sexual abuse can occur in a variety of places, including home, school or work places [2].

Most child abuse occurs within the family. Risk factors include one parent child, broken families, family issues, work frustration, a parental history of childhood abuse, and domestic violence. Child neglect and mistreatment is also more common in families living in poverty and among young parents who are drug or alcohol abusers. Although it is certainly true that child abuse occurs outside the home, most often children are abused by a caregiver or someone they know, not a stranger [3].

Prevention of child abuse is an inevitable part of the society. The impact of child maltreatment can be profound. Child abuse and maltreatment affect various systems of the child which may later leads to many other disorders [4].

When parents give more attention and are caring towards the children and discuss child's problem parents and specially mother can notice child's behavior and understand child better. Parent education and knowledge is advocated as a significant component for the prevention of child maltreatment or abuse. Hence mother's knowledge and family involvement in child's well-being and development plays a major role in prevention of child abuse [5].

Every year more than 6.6 million children are abused across the nation and 20.7% are sexually abused. In 2014, state agencies found an estimated 702,000 victims of child maltreatment [6]. In India, an estimated 679,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect as per the 2013 statistics [7] And 346,830 rape cases are reported as per National Criminal Victimization survey, 2012 [8]. In Karnataka, as per 2010 survey 107 cases of child rape, 125 cases of kidnapping and abduction, 21 cases of procuring minor girls were reported which steadily increased to 142,471,45 in the year 2012 [9].

Parents should be aware of the incidences and issues happening in the society. Specially mothers should always take care of their children so that they can notice child's behavior and make them aware of things and teach children about the good and bad touch in very early age so that they may avoid abusive instances. Also notice any unusual scar mark or hurt on child's body or irritated behavior and weird behavior and detect early abuse and prevent it. Hence mothers' knowledge is very important to know regarding child abuse, signs and symptoms in children suffering from abuse to avoid it and prevent child abuse.

The researcher has realized the increased incidence of child abuse, its serious long term effects in life and deficiency of knowledge among mothers regarding prevention of child abuse. Hence the researcher felt the need to select this study and to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the knowledge of mothers regarding the prevention of child abuse

2. To find association between the knowledge of mothers and selected baseline data.

Hypothesis:

H1: there will be a significant association between knowledge of mothers on prevention of child abuse and their selected baseline data.

2. Methods

Research design:

In this study non experimental simple descriptive research design is used.

Setting of the study:

This present study was conducted in all the inpatient wards and OPD settings at FMMCH, Mangalore. The hospital is 1250 bedded multi-specialty hospital.

Population:

In this study the population was the mothers of children with 1-14 years of age in Father Muller Medical College, Mangalore.

Sample and sampling technique:

- **Sample and sample size:**

In the present study sample comprised of 100 mothers of children with 1-14 years of age in Father Muller Medical College, Mangalore.

- **Sampling technique:**

The mothers were selected for the study by convenient sampling technique.

The sample in the study consisted of hundred mothers who met the inclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria:

- Mothers with children of age 1-14
- Mothers who understand languages English and Kannada.

Exclusion criteria:

- Women who are not psychologically and physically fit.

Data collection instruments:

Tools are the procedures or instruments, used by the researcher to collect the data. The tool used to collect data consists of;

Tool 1: Baseline proforma

Tool 2: Structured knowledge questionnaire on prevention on child abuse with 21 items, which depicted the distribution of items in to three major areas: Concepts of child abuse (43%), signs and symptoms of child abuse (9%), prevention of child abuse (48%).

Reliability of the tool

The reliability of the questionnaire was found by test re test method and Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient formula was found to be 0.88, which indicated that the tool was reliable.

3. Results

The data obtained from mothers are organized, analyzed and presented under the following headings:

Section I: Description of Demographic variables

Section II: Knowledge of mothers regarding Prevention of child abuse.

Section III: Association between knowledge on Prevention of child abuse and demographic variables

Description of demographic variables

Analysis of demographic variables shows that highest (35%) of the mothers are in the age group of 26-30 years and about 24% of them were in the age group of 31-35 years. Majorities (44%) of the mothers were with 2 children, 41% of the mothers with 1 child, and only 2% mothers with more than 3 children. Among the group majority (52%) of the mothers were having 1 male child and 55% were having one female child. The data also showed that 47% of them have at least one child below 14 years.

Majority (82%) of mothers agreed that they have received knowledge regarding prevention of child abuse through various sources however 18 % of them had not received any information regarding child abuse. The source of information, majority (69%) of the mothers had gained knowledge through newspapers, 59% of the mothers gained knowledge through television, 40% of the mothers had gained knowledge through internet, only 27% of the mothers gained knowledge through school programs.

Knowledge of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse

Knowledge level of 100 mothers was collected by questionnaire method which indicates majority of the mothers (60%) had excellent level of knowledge and 34% mothers have good knowledge and none of them have poor knowledge. The overall mean of the

knowledge score of mothers on prevention of child abuse is 16.72 ± 2.947 .

Table 1: Knowledge score and grading of mothers on prevention of child abuse

N=100

Knowledge score	Grading level of knowledge	Frequency	%
17-21	Excellent	60	60
12-16	Good	34	34
7-11	Average	6	6
<7	Poor	0	0

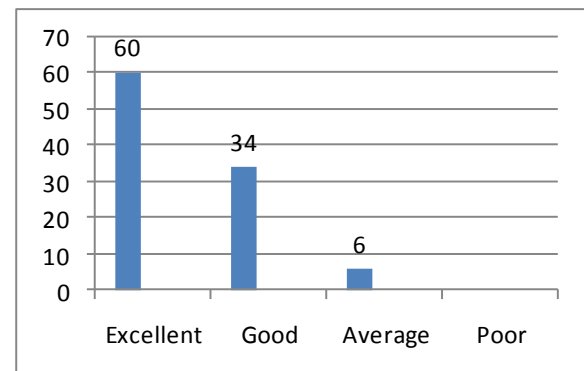


Fig 1: Distribution of mothers according to knowledge score

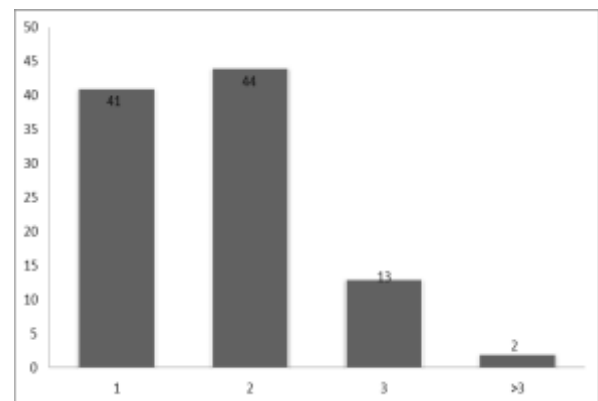


Figure 2: Distribution of subject according to the number of children

The mean value of the knowledge score of mothers on concepts of child abuse is 6.71 ± 1.662 . Mean value of knowledge of mothers on signs and symptoms of child abuse is 1.78 ± 0.413 , and knowledge of mothers on prevention of child abuse is 8.25 ± 1.457 . There is no significant association found between the knowledge scores

of mothers with the selected demographic variable.

4. Discussion

The study findings revealed that most of the mothers (60%) had excellent knowledge regarding prevention of child abuse, about (34%) of them had good knowledge, about (6%) had average knowledge and none of the mothers had poor knowledge.

A similar study was conducted to assess Chinese parent's knowledge, attitudes and communication practices with their children about child sexual abuse. 652 parents of grade 3 pupils of seven elementary schools in Central China completed an anonymous questionnaire. The results revealed that more than 95% of responded agreed that elementary schools should provide programs to prevent child sexual abuse and were willing to have their children participate in such programs. Many parents personally lacked basic knowledge about characteristics of perpetrators and non-physical consequences of child sexual abuse. The researcher concluded that future prevention programs should include community wide efforts to educate adults to ensure that parental advice is accurate and hopefully effective [10].

A study was conducted in India "To assess the awareness and views on child abuse and neglect in urban and rural areas". The aim of the study was obtain information regarding the level of awareness among the public on child abuse. The study revealed that there was no significant difference in awareness level among both urban and rural samples, regarding awareness responded from urban samples seemed to be more knowledgeable than the rural sample in the area of rights of their child ($X^2 = 2.16$ at 0.01 level of significance rural; 97) [11].

A child is a tender human being which needs support in all forms for its all-round development. It is very pathetic that many parents unknowingly abuse their child sometimes. They do not differentiate between the methods of disciplining the child and the form of abuse and neglect. Most of the situation they ignore to take preventive measures where their children could be a victim of child abuse. Thus we affirmed the need for making parents aware about child abuse and how it can be prevented.

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